

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4578

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8909

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: POSSIBLE NEW CONSTITUTION

1. SUMMARY: CONVENTION TO DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION (TO REPLACE THAT OF 1853) MAY BE CALLED NEXT YEAR. SPECULATION IS THAT IT WILL PROVIDE FOR SOME FORM OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY GENERAL OF PRESIDENCY VICENTE SOLANO LIMA INDICATED DEC 5 THAT ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MIGHT BE HELD AS EARLY AS SEPT 1974. PERON, HE SAID, WOULD ALSO INVITE LEADERS ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TO DISCUSS AND CONTRIBUTE IDEAS TO NEW CONSTITUTION, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR MODERN REPRESENTATIVE, FEDERAL SYSTEM, LIMA SPECULATED THAT NEW CONSTITUTION MIGHT GO INTO EFFECT ON MAY 25, 1975.

3. MILITARY KNOWN TO BE SOMEWHAT SUSPICIOUS, THOUGH NOT IMPLACABLY OPPOSED TO IDEA NEW CONSTITUTION. RICARDO BALBIN OF UCR HAS TAKEN POSITION THAT MORE STABLE PEACEFUL CONDITIONS NEEDED BEFORE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION CAN BE CALLED, BUT SEVERAL OF EMBASSY'S UCR CONTACTS HAVE INDICATED

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THEIR PARTY NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT

PERONISTS MAY ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE SOME LIMITATIONS ON POLITICAL LIBERTIES, BUT BELIEVE THIS IS PROBLEM WHICH COULD BE HANDLED IF OTHER PARTIES REMAIN UNITED IN OPPOSITION TO ANY SUCH MEASURES.

4. LA OPINION COLUMNIST HERIBERTO KAHN DEC 7 SPECULATES THAT PERON HOPES THROUGH NEW CONSTITUTION TO PROVIDE FOR POLITICAL SYSTEM MORE ADEQUATE TO CONDITIONS WHICH LIKELY TO PREVAIL IN ARGENTINA AFTER HIS DEATH. LIKE DE GAULLE (WHO PERON MUCH ADMIRERED AND TO WHOM HE FREQUENTLY REFERS), PERON SAID TO REALIZE HE LAST STRONG PRESIDENTIAL FIGURE; HENCE, A PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVT PROBABLY MORE APPROPRIATE AND KAHN INDICATES THIS IS WHAT NEW CONSITIUTION WILL SPECIFY.

5. COMMENT: KAHN MAY OR MAY NOT BE RIGHT. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT SOLANO LIMA IS FIGURE PUSHING HARDEST FOR NEW CONSTITUTION. AS SEC GEN OF PRESIDENCY, HE FREQUENTLY (THOUGH SOMEWHAT INCORRECTLY) DESCRIBED AS PERONS UNOFFICIAL PRIME MINISTER, AND HE KNOWN TO HOPE PERON WILL NAME HIM AS SUCCESSOR (COMMENT: NOT LIKELY). PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WOULD THEREFORE BE MUCH TO HIS LIKING--WHICH MAY EXPLAIN WHY HE WANTS A NEW CONSTITUTION QUICK.

KREBS

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